

香港特別行政區政府
政務司司長辦公室轄下行政署



The Government of
The Hong Kong Special Administrative Region
Administration Wing,
Chief Secretary for Administration's Office

2 Tim Mei Avenue, Tamar, Hong Kong

香港添馬添美道 2 號

本函檔號 Our Ref.:

19 December 2011

來函檔號 Your Ref.:

Ms Miranda Hon
Clerk
Public Accounts Committee
Legislative Council
Legislative Council Complex
1 Legislative Council Road
Central
Hong Kong

Dear Ms Hon,

**The Director of Audit's Report on the
results of value for money audits (Report No. 57)**

**Records management work of
the Government Records Service (Chapter 10)**

Thank you for your letter dated 30 November 2011 on the above subject. As requested, we are pleased to provide the relevant information in the **Annex** to facilitate the Public Accounts Committee's consideration. A soft copy of our response in both English and Chinese will be sent to you via e-mail.

Yours sincerely,
Jennifer Mak

(Miss Jennifer Mak)
Director of Administration

c.c. Government Records Service Director
Director of Audit
Secretary for Financial Services and the Treasury

Encl

**Information Note for the Public Accounts Committee
on Chapter 10 of the Director of Audit's Report No. 57
“Records management work of the
Government Records Service”**

I. Record management programme

(paragraphs 2.3 and 2.4 of the Audit Report)

The Records Management Manual (RMM) prescribes, among other things, that bureaux and departments (B/Ds) should institute and implement a comprehensive records management programme throughout their organizations. Such a programme is necessary to provide proper handling of government records through establishing control for the creation, organization, maintenance and disposal of government records.

2. Apart from the RMM, we have also issued guidelines and circulars to assist B/Ds in managing their records. A flow chart showing each key stage/process of records management as well as details of the actions and procedures involved are at Appendices I(a) and I(b) respectively. Although the processes are presented as if in a sequence, it should be noted that some of them may take place simultaneously, e.g. records creation and classification are often carried out as an integrated series of actions.

II. Compliance with mandatory record management requirements

(paragraphs 2.7 and 2.8 of the Audit Report)

3. We have promulgated vide General Circular No. 2/2009 a set of mandatory records management requirements for compliance by B/Ds. These requirements have a wide coverage, including proper management of e-mail records, records classification, records disposal (including destruction of records subject to prior consent of Government Records Service (GRS) Director and transfer of records having archival value to the GRS), proper custody and storage of records, and protection of vital records.

***Note by Clerk, PAC: Appendices I(a), II(a) and II(b) not attached.**

4. To ensure B/Ds' compliance with these mandatory requirements, we have/will put in place the following arrangements and measures -

- (a) requesting heads of B/Ds to accord appropriate priority and resources to implement a proper records management programme throughout their organizations;
- (b) requiring B/Ds to appoint Departmental Records Managers (DRMs) to oversee the departmental records management programme. In this connection, GRS has been reaching out to DRMs to provide the necessary support through training, briefings and written advice. As the majority of DRMs are Executive Officers (EOs) and members of the EO grade are heavily involved in records management duties in B/Ds, GRS will further strengthen the training for EOs by including records management in the mandatory development programme for EO I starting from January 2012;
- (c) strengthening records management support for B/Ds. GRS has conducted focused records management seminars for records managers and records management staff in selected B/Ds to increase their awareness of the mandatory records management requirements. Such seminars have already been organized for the Hong Kong Police Force, Social Welfare Department, Lands Department, Housing Department and Fire Services Department. We will continue to conduct such seminars for B/Ds to enhance their awareness and compliance of mandatory records management requirements;
- (d) conducting service-wide surveys on records management practices of B/Ds with focus on B/Ds' compliance with the mandatory requirements. GRS has conducted the first survey in the second half of 2010. Heads of B/Ds have been urged to implement the recommendations of the survey to further enhance records management in their organizations. GRS will initiate another survey in the second half of 2012;
- (e) for the three mandatory records management requirements with a deadline of April 2012, monitoring B/Ds' compliance through their

submission of quarterly reports with effect from September 2011;

- (f) conducting comprehensive records management reviews/audits of individual B/Ds to monitor their compliance with the mandatory requirements, among others. GRS will start such records management reviews/audits upon completion of the current round of records management studies for all B/Ds in 2012; and
- (g) reminding B/Ds to re-circulate the relevant General Circulars at regular intervals.

5. The mandatory records management requirements promulgated through General Circular No. 2/2009 are of equal application and force to Government Regulations. Accordingly, the mandatory records management requirements are binding on all government servants. Government servants who do not comply with the mandatory requirements may be subject to disciplinary action. Depending on the circumstances and seriousness of the misconduct/offence, the range of punishment that may be imposed on civil servants includes verbal or written warnings, reprimand, severe reprimand, reduction in rank, compulsory retirement and dismissal.

III. Records appraisal

(paragraphs 4.3 and 4.4 of the Audit Report)

Appraisal criteria

6. Based on the experience of other countries, GRS has developed and adopted in July 2009 a set of appraisal guidelines with a view to providing a general framework to assist in the selection of archival records in a coherent and consistent manner. According to these guidelines, records likely to be selected as archival records may include the following -

- (a) records that document or reflect the organization, functions and activities of the Government;
- (b) records that document the formation process, implementation and outcome of significant policies, decisions, legislation and actions of the Government;

- (c) records that document the impact of the decisions, policies and programmes of the Government upon the physical environment, community, organizations and individuals;
- (d) records that document the interaction between the public and the Government as well as between the physical environment and the Government;
- (e) records that document the legal rights and obligations of individuals, groups, organizations and the Government; and
- (f) records that contain significant or unique information or aged documents that can enrich the understanding about the history, physical environment, society, culture, economy and people of Hong Kong.

7. GRS will continue to keep the appraisal guidelines under review to meet changing circumstances.

Manpower deployed on records appraisal

8. At present, three Archivist grade staff at GRS are responsible for records appraisal as part of their duties. In general, the time required for appraising a record will vary depending on the complexity and content of the records to be appraised. Based on the time the relevant staff spent on records appraisal, about 0.8 man-hour was required for appraising one liner meter of records in 2010.

Clearing the backlog of records appraisals

9. In addition to handling new appraisal requests, GRS will redeploy resources to clear the records appraisal backlog. Since there are existing vacancies in the Archivist grade, GRS has already started a recruitment exercise to recruit Assistant Archivists and expects that new recruits will report for duty in the next few months. GRS will actively explore measures, including seeking additional resources as appropriate according to the established mechanism, with the aim of clearing the backlog in three years' time.

IV. Destruction of records by the records centre before appraisal

(paragraphs 4.10 and 4.11 of the Audit Report)

10. The time-expired records destroyed by the records centre in 2006 and 2007 related to the Home Affairs Department (HAD) and the Official Receiver's Office (ORO). A total of 326 records belonged to HAD and a list of these records is at Appendix II(a). The remaining records were files relating to bankruptcy and liquidation cases of individuals and companies from ORO. According to a microfilm of the records, these files involved 838 bankruptcy and 616 liquidation cases. A list of these cases, each case of which may involve more than one record, showing the names of individuals and companies concerned is at Appendix II(b).

11. As regards records belonging to ORO, PRO, after appraising the microfilm of the paper records, has confirmed the archival value of the microfilm records and stored them in GRS. Although the names of individuals and companies in bankruptcy and liquidation cases are public information, PAC may wish to consider whether it is appropriate to include such personal data in the PAC report to be published.

12. GRS has conducted thorough investigations into the two cases in question. As a result of the investigations and to prevent recurrence of similar cases, GRS has –

- (a) counseled the staff concerned and reminded them to strictly follow the relevant procedures for handling records disposal;
- (b) reviewed the internal procedures for handling records disposal; and
- (c) as a result of (b), introduced since March 2008 a disposal check form to control the disposal process by setting out clearly the steps and the responsible officers involved. To complement the introduction of the disposal check form, all correspondence pertaining to a particular records deposit have since been put in a single case file to facilitate monitoring and processing of disposal requests.

13. Since the implementation of the measures mentioned in paragraph 12 above, there has been no inadvertent destruction of records by the records centre. GRS will keep the enhanced internal controls under review to prevent destruction of records before their archival value has been appraised.

V. Condition survey conducted in 2002

(paragraph 4.15 of the Audit Report)

14. In the condition survey conducted in 2002, GRS' conservation adviser classified the condition of 1,611 sampled items into five categories, viz. "Very good", "Good", "Middle", "Deteriorated" and "Very deteriorated". In brief, a total of 529 items (32.8%) were classified as "Very good" or "Good", 643 items (39.9%) were classified as "Middle" and 439 items (27.3%) were classified as "Deteriorated" or "Very deteriorated". A breakdown is given below -

Condition	No. of items
▪ Very good	91
▪ Good	438
Sub-total	529 (32.8%)
▪ Middle	643 (39.9%)
▪ Deteriorated	363
▪ Very deteriorated	76
Sub-total	439 (27.3%)
Total	1,611 (100.0%)

15. For the 439 items (27.3%) classified as "Deteriorated" or "Very deteriorated", their condition and degree of deterioration are set out in the table below for reference -

Format of records	Degree of deterioration		Condition
	Deteriorated	Very Deteriorated	
Files	267	32	Browning of paper, surface dirt, stains, creases and folds, tears, deteriorating self adhesive tape, improperly glued on secondary support like paper, cardboard, textile, loss of paper support, acidic ink, rust, insect and pest damage, cockling, paper support becoming brittle
Books, Booklets & Pamphlets	75	42	
Single Sheet Paper	7	1	
Architectural Drawings	1	0	
Maps	1	0	
Periodicals & Newspapers	1	0	
Still Photographic Materials, e.g. photographic prints, negatives and transparencies	4	0	Fingerprints , greasy, discolouration, insect damage, mould, deteriorating self-adhesive tapes, rust, stains, surface dirt
Picture & Sound Recordings (audiotapes)	1	0	Improperly glued on secondary support: textile
Microfilms	4	1	Mould, insect damage
Motion Picture Film	2	0	Acidic smell, image faded
Total:	363	76	

16. In light of the preservation strategies formulated based on the findings of the condition survey in 2002, GRS has implemented the following measures apart from pursuing good handling and housekeeping practices -

- (a) housing each and every archive item in protective enclosures;
- (b) enhancing insect control through an integrated pest management

programme to monitor the activity level of pest (including insects, fungi and rodents) in all archive repositories;

- (c) strengthening GRS' professional capability to preserve and conserve archival items by entrusting the responsibility to the Curator grade since January 2008;
- (d) enhancing climatic monitoring of the repositories with the installation of a real-time data logging system since January 2010; and
- (e) embarking on another condition survey in October 2011 with a view to revisiting the various strategies and improving the preservation of GRS' holdings.

VI. Accessioning and description of archival records

(paragraphs 4.27 and 4.30(a) of the Audit Report)

17. To facilitate users in identifying the required records from GRS' voluminous archival holdings, GRS arranges records description, i.e. describes the archival records according to international standards and prepares different kinds of finding aids, before they are made available for public inspection. Records description is a related and the most time-consuming part of records accessioning. GRS has since 2006 deployed a Senior Assistant Archivist (SAA) to conduct records description.

18. Details of the latest action plan to clear the backlog of archival records pending accessioning, in addition to handling new accessioning cases, are as follows -

- (a) adopting a simplified approach since July 2010 to records description so as to shorten the process while providing the core descriptive information to facilitate on-line search;
- (b) according priority to records which will reach 30 years soon, i.e. accessioning these records first so that they may be opened for public inspection upon their reaching 30 years old; and

- (c) speeding up the accessioning work through additional resources. A temporary research assistant has assisted in records accessioning work since November 2011.

19. GRS will actively explore measures, including seeking additional resources as appropriate according to the established mechanism, with the aim of clearing the bulk of the backlog in three years' time.

VII. Manpower of GRS

20. The officer grade staff of GRS comes from three grades, i.e. the Archivist, EO and Curator grades. According to the existing distribution of work, Archivists are mainly responsible for the selection and management of archival records; EOs are responsible for records management while Curator Grade staff undertake the duties of conservation and preservation of archival records.

21. To enrich the professional knowledge and expertise of the Archivist, EO and Curator grades staff, GRS arranges records management training for them. Arrangements are made from time to time for them to attend international conferences and seminars so that they may share experience with overseas archival and records management institutions. Since 2008, a total of 12 overseas training programmes in the form of conference/visit/training have been arranged providing 15 training places for them. Consultancy service will also be engaged where necessary, particularly on specific issues relating to electronic records management.

22. Notwithstanding the above, GRS will continue to keep under review the establishment of different grades from time to time so as to ensure work quality and the provision of good service to the public for access to archival records. We will also review the work processes of GRS to see if its efficiency and effectiveness can be further improved. We will monitor the situation closely to ensure sufficient manpower to cope with the different types of records management work. We will also seek additional manpower as appropriate according to the established mechanism.

Administration Wing, Chief Secretary for Administration's Office
December 2011

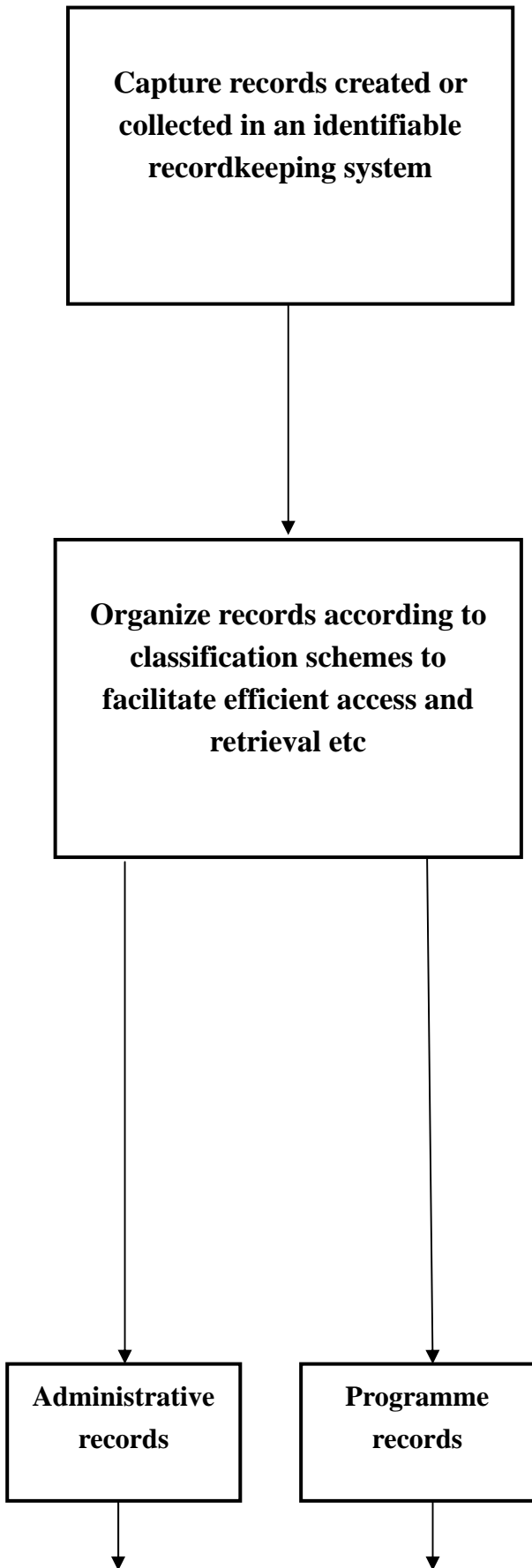
Records Management Processes

I. Creation/Collection of Records by Bureaux and Departments(B/Ds)

Actions and Procedures

Create and collect records to meet operational, policy, legal and financial purposes, and document accurately and adequately government functions, policies, procedures, decisions and transactions

- A record is any recorded information or data in any physical format or media created or received by a B/D during its course of official business and kept as evidence of policies, decisions, procedures, functions, activities and transactions.
- B/Ds should create and collect records to meet operational, policy, legal and financial purposes.
- B/Ds should identify their business functions and assess their information needs so as to create and capture adequate but not excessive records.
- The captured records should be complete: a record contains not only the content but also the structure (e.g. the structure of a memorandum covers its header and body) and contextual information (e.g. the contextual information of a memorandum includes sender, addressees, issue date, reference and security classification) necessary to document an official activity or transaction. It should be possible to understand a record in the context of the organizational processes that produced it and of other linked records.
- The following are examples of what records should be created and kept –
 - inward and outward communication with external persons and bodies directly relating to the functions and activities of the organization;
 - minutes and other records of meetings, consultations and deliberations pertinent to the decision-making process, formulation of policies and procedures or transaction of business;
 - major oral decisions and commitments; and
 - individual exercise of a discretionary judgment which has a major effect on the functions and activities of the organization.
- Records should be created in the most suitable medium and format that would facilitate access, use and preservation as required.
- For electronic mail records, B/Ds should print and file them in paper-based files.
- B/Ds should encourage the shared use of records as far as possible and minimize duplication and proliferation of unnecessary records.



Actions and Procedures

- B/Ds should capture and maintain records created or collected in an identifiable recordkeeping system.
- A recordkeeping system is a manual or automated information system in which records are collected, organized and categorized to facilitate their retrieval, distribution, use, disposal or preservation. It should include at least a records classification scheme(s) with related index(es), a complete records inventory, records disposal schedules, vital records lists, and procedures and documentation for records coding, filing, retrieval, movement tracking, disposal as well as identification and protection of vital records.

Actions and Procedures

- B/Ds should organize records according to classification schemes to facilitate efficient access and retrieval of records.
- A records classification scheme is a plan for logical arrangement of records according to one or more of the following: business functions, activities and contents of the records. It includes a coding system expressed in symbols (e.g. alphabetical, numerical and alpha-numerical) to show the logical relationship amongst the records.
- A proper classification scheme should have the following characteristics –
 - it should show linkages between individual records to provide a continuous record of activities;
 - it should enable records to be uniquely named and coded in a consistent manner over time;
 - it should properly determine security protection and appropriate access for different records;
 - it should be supported by vocabulary control to suit the complexity of the records of the organization; and
 - it should be current, comprehensive, logical, consistent and structured to provide an effective means for organizing and locating records.
- To ensure quality, a B/D’s Departmental Records Manager (DRM) should approve new classification schemes and review existing classification schemes every two to three years according to the Government Records Service (GRS)’s guidelines.

Organize administrative records according to GRS' standard classification scheme



Migrate the administrative subject files from the existing scheme(s) to the standard classification scheme according to GRS' guidelines

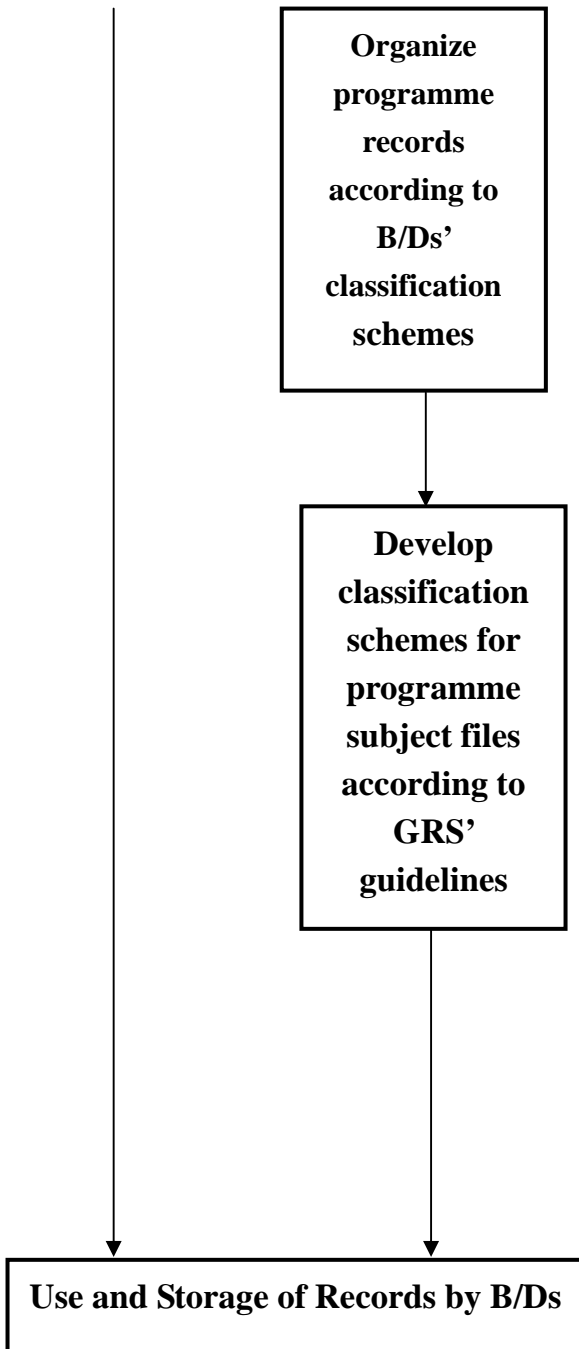


Actions and Procedures

- Administrative records are records created or received during the course of day-to-day administrative activities that deal with finance, accommodation, procurement and supply, establishment, personnel and other general administrative activities. Records of this nature are common to B/Ds.
- B/Ds should organize administrative records according to the standard records classification scheme developed by GRS.
- The standard scheme also facilitates B/Ds to adopt the set of General Administrative Records Disposal Schedules (which resembles the structure of the standard scheme to group disposal schedules) developed by GRS to dispose of time-expired administrative records.
- The standard classification scheme comprises six schedules, viz. Administration, Accommodation and Facilities, Equipment and Supplies, Finance, Personnel as well as Information Systems and Services, which provide primary subject terms for classifying administrative records by subjects.
- To adopt the standard classification scheme, B/Ds should take the following steps –
 - separate administrative subject files from other files (e.g. programme records not covered by the standard classification scheme);
 - match the existing administrative files with the appropriate primary subject terms and create secondary or lower subject terms to facilitate more precise classification of records as appropriate;
 - code the new files with appropriate file reference;
 - prepare a list of new files;
 - fix the implementation date for adopting the standard classification scheme; and
 - implement the standard classification scheme.
- B/Ds should adopt the standard classification scheme not later than April 2012.



Actions and Procedures



- Programme records are records created or received by a B/D whilst carrying out the primary functions, activities or mission for which the B/D was established. Records of this nature are unique to each B/D.
- B/Ds should make reference to GRS' guidelines to develop its own classification scheme(s) for programme records.
- The procedures for developing a subject records classification scheme for programme records include –
 - understand the organization and functions of the B/D with a view to grouping and maintaining programme records according to functions and activities to which they relate;
 - itemize records to be classified by subject which is easily understandable by users;
 - reconcile the preliminary subject list with departmental guidelines to ensure consistency and quality of the scheme;
 - define topic coverage clearly to facilitate accurate classification;
 - prepare draft subject list for discussion with users and finalize the subject list;
 - select and assign file reference to easily identify files and show logical relationship between files; and
 - prepare alphabetical index which helps users to identify a suitable subject term for classifying a record as appropriate.

II. Use and Storage of Records by B/Ds

Actions and Procedures

Maintain an accurate records inventory

- An accurate inventory of records is a prerequisite for good records management because it facilitates efficient control and retrieval of records and provides basic information to support records management activities (e.g. establishing records disposal schedules).
- B/Ds should prepare and maintain an accurate inventory of records and update the inventory regularly to cater for changes.
- A records inventory on files should at least include the following information –
 - file title;
 - file reference number;
 - dated opened and dated closed; and
 - storage location.

Actions and Procedures

Store records in appropriate environment and facilities to facilitate access and protection

- B/Ds should store their records in such a manner so as to facilitate user access and protection from unauthorized access, use, disclosure, removal, deterioration, loss or destruction.
- For storing classified records, B/Ds should follow the provisions in the Security Regulations.
- Records should be stored in an environment protected from dirt, insects and rodents, smoke, chemical exhausts, and away from direct sunlight and risk of water damage (e.g. under water pipes, near unblocked windows). Records storage area should be kept clean and smoking free. There must be an effective fire detection and suppression system installed in the records storage area.
- Records should be stored in equipment and facilities (e.g. cabinets, shelves) that are appropriate to the records format, size and other physical conditions.
- Records having long-term value (30 years or over) should be stored in an 24-hour air-conditioned environment with stable and controlled temperature and humidity, e.g. for paper-based records: temperature 20°C +/- 2°C and relative humidity 50 % +/- 5 %.

Provide records to authorized users for access and conducting business



Track movement of records



Monitor bulk relocation of records to minimize the risk of loss



Actions and Procedures

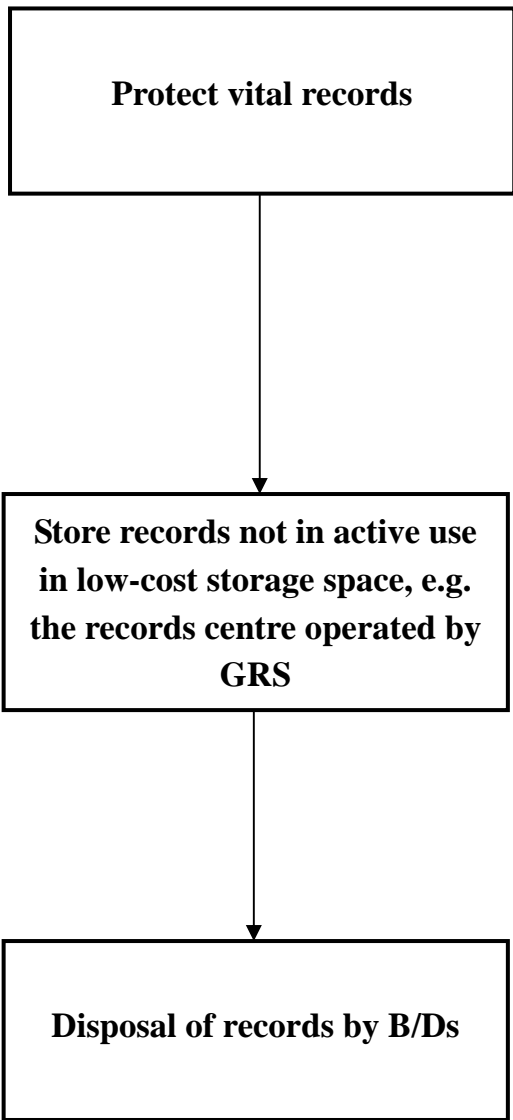
- B/Ds should adopt an effective means to retrieve records for authorized users in a timely manner.
- B/Ds should process and transmit classified records according to the Security Regulations.
- B/Ds should provide public access to their records according to the Personal Data (Privacy) Ordinance and Code on Access to Information.

Actions and Procedures

- B/Ds should track the physical movement of records to ensure that the records can always be located when required.
- B/Ds should adopt effective means (e.g. a bar-coding system) to track the movement of records.
- B/Ds should report loss of records cases to GRS immediately. The B/D concerned should investigate the case, implement improvement measures and consider taking disciplinary action or other administrative action against the staff concerned. GRS will consider the B/D's findings and actions and provide advice as appropriate.

Actions and Procedures

- B/Ds should make the following arrangement during bulk relocation of records to minimize the risk of loss –
 - designating an officer not below the rank of Executive Officer II or equivalent to oversee the task;
 - taking stock before the relocation exercise;
 - conducting a file inventory check after relocation;
 - documenting the inventory check; and
 - updating the new storage location immediately afterwards.



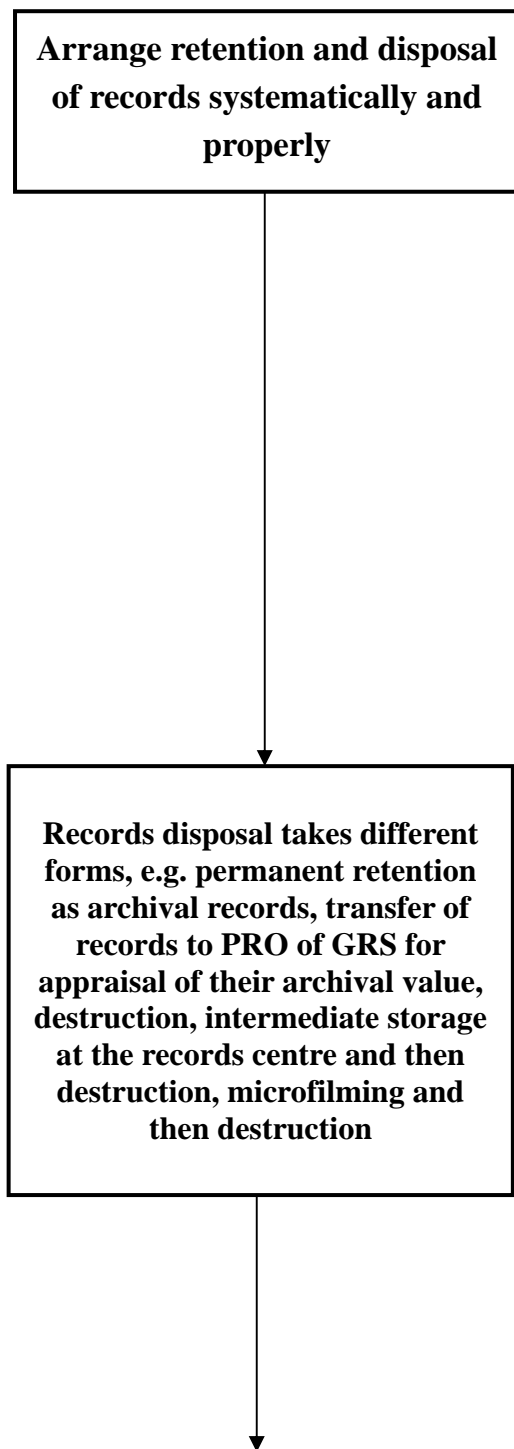
Actions and Procedures

- Vital records are those records containing information essential to the continued and effective operation of a B/D during and after an emergency or disaster.
- B/Ds should identify and protect their vital records by way of duplication or off-site storage to ensure uninterrupted operation of major business functions.
- B/Ds should draw up an action plan not later than April 2012 to establish and implement a vital records protection programme.

Actions and Procedures

- For records not in active use, B/Ds should consider storing them in low-cost off-site space, e.g. the records centre operated by GRS.

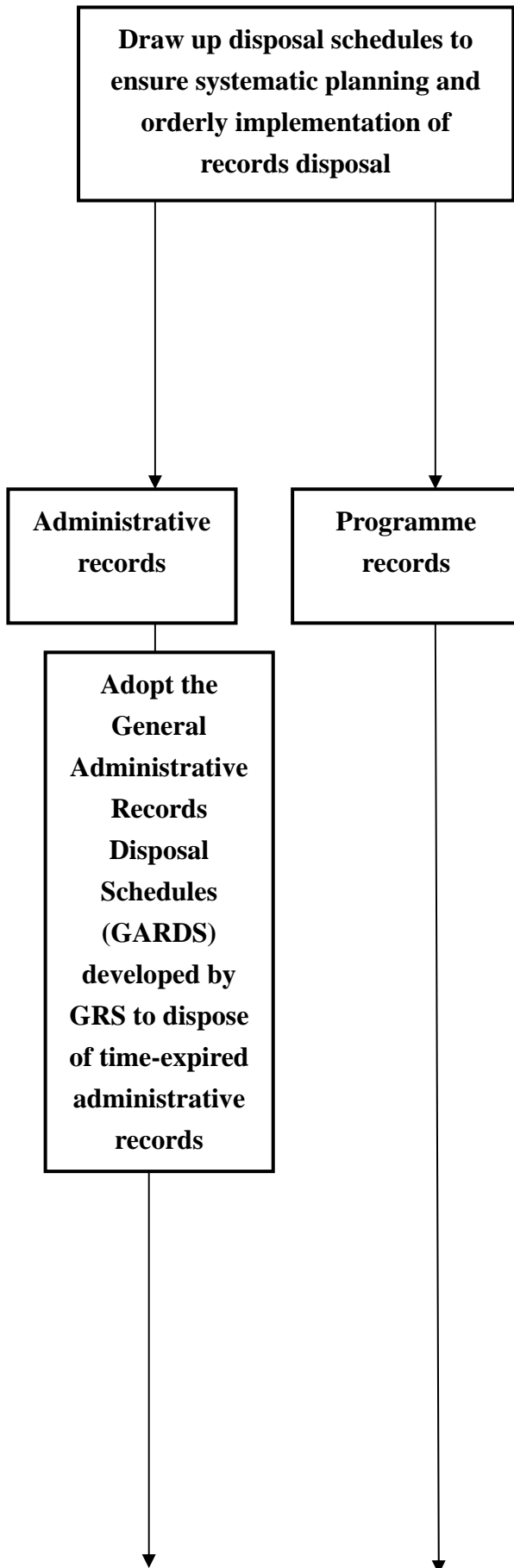
III. Disposal of Records by B/Ds



Actions and Procedures

- Records accumulate and grow in the course of business. If records are not properly and systematically disposed of, useful and unwanted records will mix together making records retrieval difficult and time-consuming and hence affect operational efficiency. Furthermore, as records continue to build up, more resources will have to be set aside to meet storage needs.
- B/Ds should therefore properly plan and implement records disposal to achieve the following –
 - records are kept the right length of time to meet the purposes they are created and in compliance with laws and regulations;
 - unnecessary records accumulated is reduced, and broader and more effective use of existing records is promoted;
 - archival records are identified and preserved through transfer to the Public Records Office (PRO) of GRS; and
 - timely access to records is facilitated.
- Records disposal means the action taken on records no longer in active use which have little or no values to B/Ds. Records disposal takes different forms, e.g. permanent retention as archival records, transfer of records to PRO of GRS for appraisal of their archival value, destruction, intermediate storage at the records centre and then destruction, or microfilming and then destruction.
- GRS has the overall responsibility for authorizing the disposal of government records through approving records disposal requests and records disposal schedules.
- B/Ds must obtain the prior agreement of the GRS Director before they destroy any government records. B/Ds should transfer their records having archival value to PRO of GRS.

Actions and Procedures



- A records disposal schedule is a systematic listing or description of B/D's records which indicates the arrangements to be made for their custody, retention period and disposal action.
- To ensure systematic planning and orderly implementation of records disposal after records have been kept the right length of time to meet the purposes they are created and in compliance with legal or statutory requirements, B/Ds should draw up records disposal schedules according to GRS' guidelines.
- B/Ds should prepare and forward to GRS draft disposal schedules covering all their programme records not later than April 2012.

Actions and Procedures

- Administrative records are records created or received during the course of day-to-day administrative activities that deal with finance, accommodation, procurement and supply, establishment, personnel and other general administrative activities. Records of this nature are common to B/Ds.
- B/Ds should adopt the General Administrative Records Disposal Schemes (GARDS) developed by GRS to dispose of time-expired administrative records. PRO of GRS has incorporated its archival requirements (e.g. transfer of records to PRO for appraisal of their archival value) into GARDS for B/Ds' compliance.
- GARDS comprises six schedules, namely Administration, Accommodation and Facilities, Procurement and Supplies, Finance and Accounting, Human Resources as well as Information Systems and Services. The subject groups under each schedule set out the retention and disposal requirements of the relevant records.
- The retention and disposal requirements cover the retention period and disposal action (including transfer of records having potential archival value to PRO for appraisal and destruction) of time-expired administrative records.

Actions and Procedures

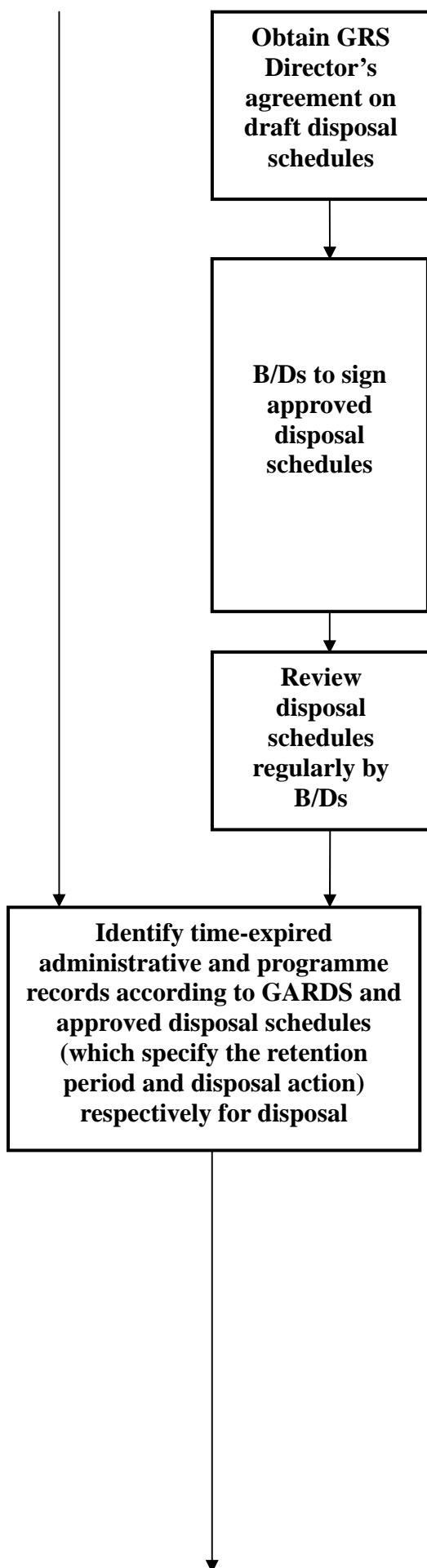
Develop disposal schedules for programme records by B/Ds according to GRS' guidelines

- Programme records are records created or received by a B/D whilst carrying out the primary functions, activities or mission for which the B/D was established. Records of this nature are unique to each B/D.
- B/Ds should, in consultation with GRS, develop disposal schedules for their programme records according to GRS' guidelines.
- The procedures for developing disposal schedules for programme records include –
 - conduct a records survey to inventory all the programme records in the B/D;
 - group records into records series which cover records created or received for specific activities, arranged according to a particular classification scheme;
 - identify disposal classes within a records series. A disposal class is a group of records in a records series having the same retention period and disposal action;
 - consider the following retention values of records by disposal class –
 - administrative value
 - operational value
 - legal value
 - fiscal value;
 - assign retention period; and
 - PRO of GRS will appraise the archival value of records and advise the B/D to assign appropriate disposal action, e.g. destruction, permanent retention by PRO, appraisal by PRO.

Actions and Procedures

B/Ds to endorse draft disposal schedule(s) for programme records

- Draft disposal schedules should be considered and endorsed by an officer not below the rank of Senior Executive Officer or equivalent of the B/D.



Actions and Procedures

- B/Ds should forward their draft disposal schedules for GRS Director's agreement. During the process, GRS will consider the draft disposal schedule and appraise the archival value of the records and discuss with the B/Ds concerned regarding the proposed retention period and disposal action with a view to finalizing the disposal schedules.

Actions and Procedures

- Finalized disposal schedules approved by GRS Director should be signed by an officer not below the rank of Senior Executive Officer or equivalent of the B/D.

Actions and Procedures

- B/Ds should review their disposal schedules at least once every five years to see whether amendments are required in light of changing circumstances.
- GRS has issued guidelines to B/Ds for conducting such review.

Actions and Procedures

- Regular disposal of records facilitates easy retrieval of records in active use, and minimizes costs for maintaining and storing records. Accordingly, it is necessary to arrange prompt disposal of time-expired records which have been retained for the period specified in the GARDS for administrative records and the approved disposal schedules for programme records and are ready for disposal.
- B/Ds should conduct review to dispose of time-expired records at least once every two years.
- When reviewing records for disposal, B/Ds should ensure that the retention and disposal requirements specified in the respective disposal schedules have been met, including –
 - the records have been kept the right length of time to meet the purposes they are created and in compliance with laws and regulations;
 - there is no outstanding action on the records concerned; and
 - the records concerned are ready for disposal.

B/Ds to endorse disposal of records in writing



Obtain GRS Director's prior agreement on disposal/ destruction of any government records



Arrange disposal of time-expired records after obtaining GRS Director's agreement



Actions and Procedures

- For proper internal control, disposal of records including destruction of records, should be considered and endorsed in writing by an officer not below the rank of Senior Executive Officer or equivalent in the B/D.

Actions and Procedures

- B/Ds must obtain the prior agreement of GRS Director before they destroy or dispose of any government records. This is to safeguard against premature disposal of records and destruction of records having archival value.
- When seeking GRS Director's agreement, B/Ds should provide information on the records concerned and confirm that the retention and disposal requirements specified in the respective disposal schedules have been met, including –
 - the records have been kept the right length of time to meet the purposes they are created and in compliance with laws and regulations;
 - there is no outstanding action on the records concerned; and
 - the records concerned are ready for disposal.

Actions and Procedures

- B/Ds should arrange disposal of time-expired records in accordance with the disposal action specified in the respective disposal schedules after obtaining GRS Director's agreement. The three most common disposal actions are (i) immediate destruction; (ii) transfer of records to PRO of GRS for permanent retention as archival records; and (iii) transfer of records to PRO of GRS for appraisal of their archival value before destruction.
- For records to be transferred to non-government bodies, due to such reasons as corporatization, privatization or outsourcing, the B/D concerned should send a list of records pending transfer to the GRS Director for prior agreement so that appropriate arrangements can be made for records having archival value for retention in PRO of GRS. This list should group records by disposal schedule and

includes the information on the files (i.e. file title, file reference number, date opened and date closed).

- B/Ds should not transfer any government records outside the Government unless with the prior agreement of the GRS Director.

Actions and Procedures

- B/Ds should ensure that the disposal process is properly supervised and complies with the records disposal procedures according to GRS' guidelines.
- B/Ds should report unauthorized destruction of records cases to GRS immediately. The B/D concerned should investigate the case, implement improvement measures and consider taking disciplinary action or other administrative action against the staff concerned. GRS will consider the B/D's findings and actions and provide advice as appropriate.

Actions and Procedures

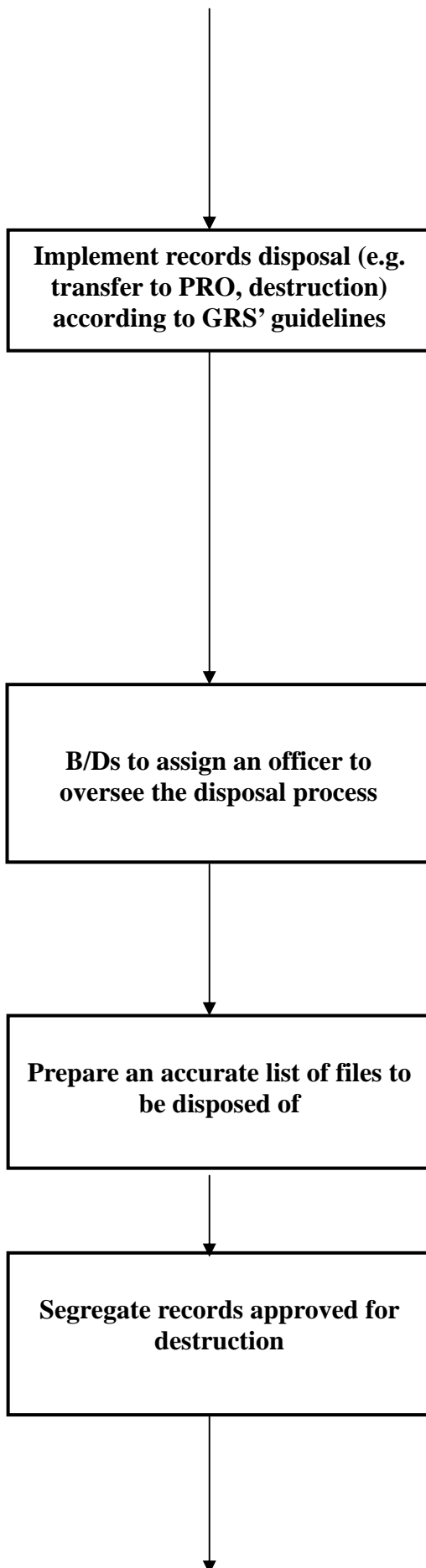
- To minimize the risk of inadvertent unauthorized destruction of records during the disposal process, B/Ds should designate an officer not below the rank of Executive Officer II or equivalent to ensure that the disposal process is properly supervised and the records disposal procedures are complied with.

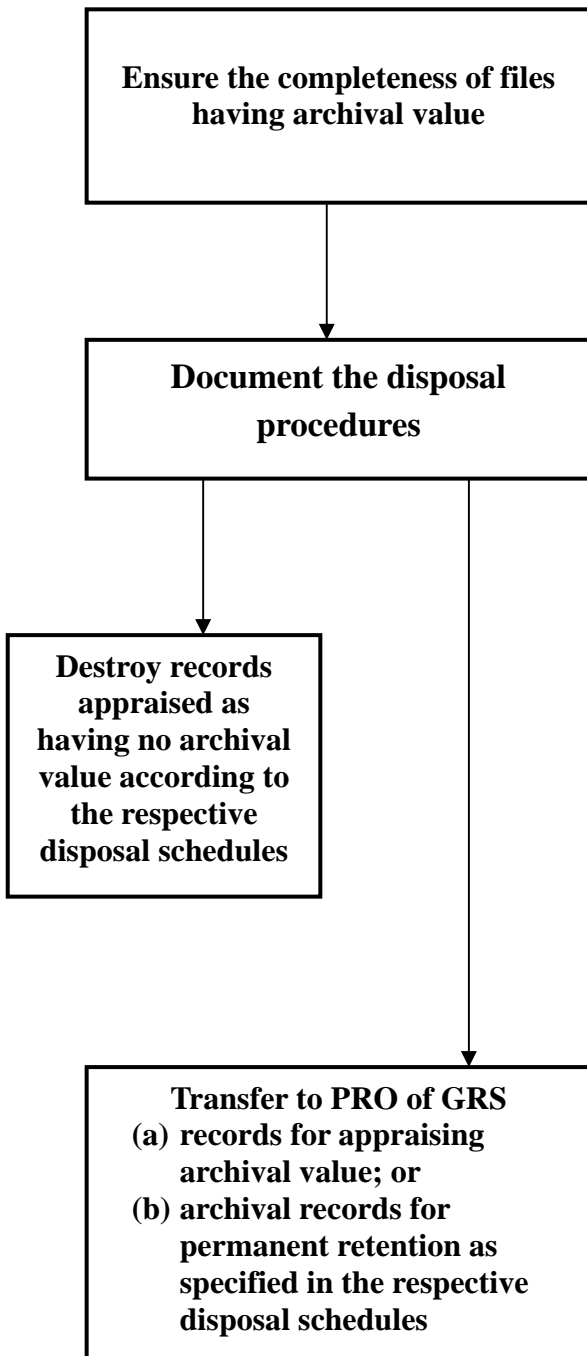
Actions and Procedures

- B/Ds should prepare a list of files to be disposed of.
- Files to be disposed of should be physically checked against the list to ensure its accuracy.

Actions and Procedures

- B/Ds should task an officer to identify those records pending disposal and check to ensure that records approved for destruction do not mix up with those pending approval.





Actions and Procedures

- For files which should be transferred to PRO of GRS for appraisal of archival value or for permanent retention, B/Ds should check the contents of the files to ensure that no enclosures or minute sheets are missing.

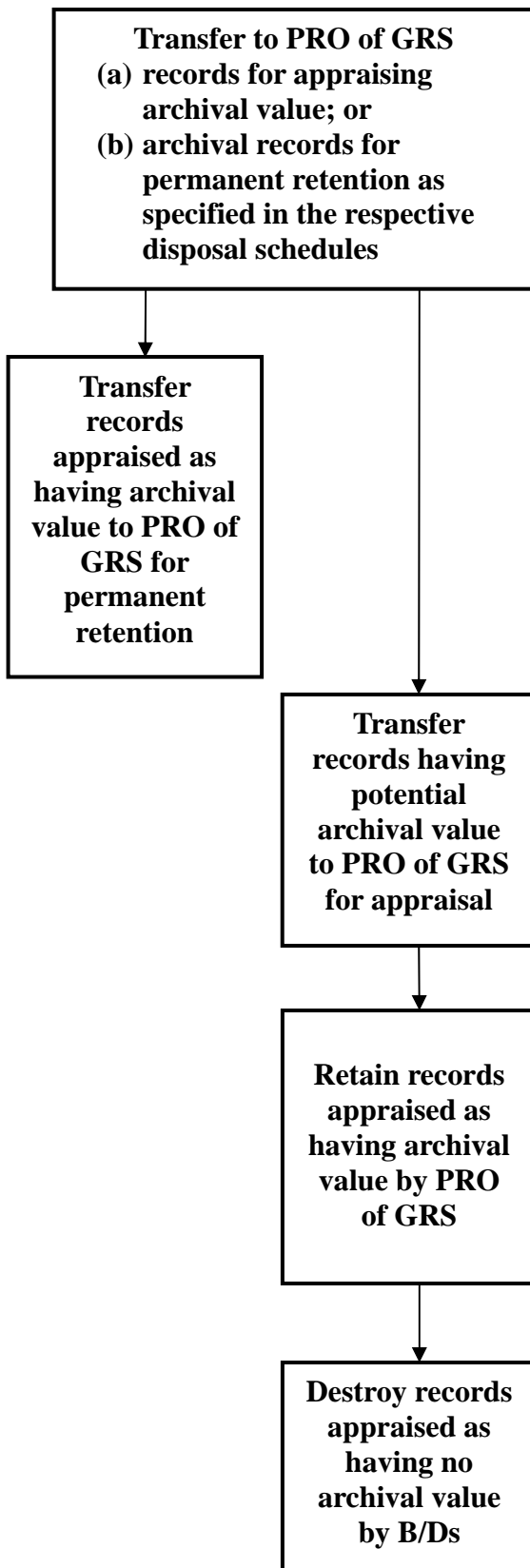
Actions and Procedures

- B/Ds should document the checks of the disposal procedures for accountability.

Actions and Procedures

- For files/records appraised as having no archival value according to the respective disposal schedules (i.e. disposal action is destruction), B/Ds should arrange physical destruction of the records through Government Logistics Department’s paper recycling contractor as appropriate and maintain a list of records destroyed.
- B/Ds should destroy classified records according to the Security Regulations.

IV. Transfer of Records to GRS by B/Ds



Actions and Procedures

- B/Ds should transfer records to PRO of GRS for permanent retention as archival records or appraisal of archival value as specified in the respective disposal schedules.

Actions and Procedures

- B/Ds should systematically transfer its archival records to the control of PRO of GRS.
- When transferring archival records to PRO, B/Ds should provide a transfer list containing information on original file reference, description of records and covering dates and advise the access status of classified records.

Actions and Procedures

- B/Ds should forward the list of records having potential archival value to PRO of GRS for examination. The list should contain information on original file reference, description of records and covering dates.

Actions and Procedures

- Based on the paper appraisal as explained above, PRO may request B/Ds to forward selected records for physical appraisal.
- B/Ds' records appraised as having archival value will be permanently retained by PRO. For classified records, B/Ds should advise the access status.

Actions and Procedures

- B/Ds should destroy those records appraised as having no archival value after obtaining GRS Director's agreement.